The
COMMONWEAL

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Our Hope

EACH CHRISTMAS during the long months of the war Americans have raised their hearts as one toward the coming of peace. All aspirations have centered on the cessation of hostilities—on the ending of hatreds, slaughter and starvation and the return of loved ones to the family hearth. All became united in that hope.

The long-sought peace has come and our unity is shattered. Many of us are once more immersed in our own petty concerns; those who are not are dismayed by the prospect in almost every direction. It is not that good will is completely lacking or that war weariness does not lead inevitably to self absorption; people are simply bewildered. Especially in the United States, the nation which in terms of power and responsibility now looms largest. A sense of the common good and of history, imagination and skill are lacking.

There have been hundreds of articles about atomic energy since we launched the fateful bomb over Hiroshima. Witnesses by the score have testified before congressional committees. Everyone—with a few notorious exceptions—agrees that the atomic bomb and the establishment of a true world federation go hand in hand; yet everything is blocked by the fact that veto power continues to reside with the permanent members of the UNO Security Council. No viable formula is at hand. So, too, all along the international line. The impasse with Soviet Russia, the plight of faction-divided China, the aspirations of colonial peoples, the future of Germany and Japan—all constitute problems about which we have failed to reach sufficiently specific conclusions. And most immediate of all is the inescapable fact that with vast surpluses of basic foodstuffs and plenty of shipping space we are allowing the peoples of Europe and the Far East (former allies and former enemies alike, and unjustifiably in both cases) to succumb to starvation, disease and despair of ever again earning a livelihood. That is our nation's shame this Christmas.

Here at home things are naturally less desperate. Yet they reflect the same unconcern for the common good, the same national bewilderment. About half the army is demobilized; the fact that jobs are still comparatively plentiful is a temporary phenomenon not due to planning of any scope, while the acute housing shortage which confronts returning veterans grows progressively more outrageous. The UAW-Ford proceedings are the first major indication that there is a way out of the wages, prices, purchasing power labyrinth which faces nearly every one of America's larger industries. The Tennessee Valley Authority has conclusively demonstrated the most effective technique for building up strategic regions of the country, but powerful opposition and popular lethargy have blocked similar projects.

It is needless further to extend this list to rural and other national problems. The point is obvious.

Many Americans this Christmas are joyful over the return of their loved ones. All of us are grateful that hostilities have ceased. Some new hope springs from the latest mission to Moscow, as from the prospect of the new Ford agreement in Detroit. There is also a growing realization that abandonment of national sovereignty is essential to lasting peace. But too many things remain unsettled. There is an uneasy feeling about this Christmas which goes beyond even the knowledge that many of our fellow-men in other lands are cold and hungry and despairing while we sit down to twenty-pound turkeys. We Americans are largely responsible for the fact that our own fairly immediate and personal future is highly precarious. For us the Magnificat antiphon for the eve of the publication date of this Christmas issue could therefore hardly embody a more appropriate prayer:

> O Key of David, and Sceptre of the house of Israel: Who openest and no man shutteth; Who shuttest, and no man openeth: come, and lead the captive from prison, sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

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Brave Men

A NEW Italian cabinet has been formed; it is headed by Alcide de Gasperi of the Christian-Democrat Party which means that it is headed by a Catholic. In the cabinet are members of the Communist Party which means that Premier de Gasperi is working with people who do not like Catholics at all. There are also Socialists and perhaps the Italian Socialists like Catholics now but they used not to do so. The spectacle is somewhat amazing and entirely natural.

It is astonishing, because it is impossible not to remember that there was a time, not long ago, when Italian Catholics did not even vote. It is entirely natural, because Italy, together with many other countries, tedious to enumerate, is a wrecked country, a country reduced to a very minimum of hope, whose people are hungry and tired—a bankrupt country. In such a country, in all such countries, there still are brave men who do not despair; who do not lie down and die—brave men who go to work. These men no matter whether Catholics or anything else will work for their country with any men of their kind.

And so in Italy now you find a Christian Democrat running the government and Foreign Affairs, and another running the Post Offices, and another trying to do something with the department of Industry and Commerce; you find a Communist Minister of Justice, and another one (selected perhaps because Russian theory still conservatively believes in gold) running the desperate Italian finances, and another one trying to get food from Agriculture; you find a Socialist Vice-Premier, and another one at the Interior, which includes police. And then there are Liberals, Labor Democrats, the theorists of the Action Party.

All these men will be throwing their efforts away—and they know it—unless the victorious nations—and *they* know it—start making it possible for Italy to live.

The Labor Pot Continues to Boil

PERHAPS the most interesting development in the field of labor during the past weeks is the acceptance in principle by the Auto Workers of explicit union responsibility for continuous production once a contract has been negotiated. The Ford Company insisted upon this, and many Americans who are opposed to organized labor felt that the union would never take up the challenge. Smartly the UAW leadership knocked the under-pinnings out from beneath any such notion.

John L. Lewis, however, captured last week's headlines by his testimony before the House Labor Committee in Washington. As usual Mr. Lewis expressed himself with pungency and wit, and of course the press gobbled it up. With what he said regarding proposed labor legislation we are thoroughly in agreement; his analysis of the strategic position of General Motors and the UAW repeats what was said in these columns several months ago: General Motors, because of the tax setup, can afford not to produce a car and still not seriously affect its profits, whereas the workers have only meager resources with which to continue their strike. But the most amusing aspect of Mr. Lewis's testimony—amusing because it is so complete a giveaway regarding his position in his own union—was his blasting the leadership of the Auto Workers for striking at this inauspicious juncture. Evidently the thought that these benighted leaders had no choice in the matter because the rank and file was fed up to the gills and wanted to strike, come what may, never occurred to Mr. Lewis, whose attitude toward his own rank and file and toward labor union democracy in general is pretty obvious.

Christmas Wishes for Mr. Byrnes

SINCE the Secretary of State of the United States is going to have to spend Christmas away from home, it seems only decent to speed him on his way with a few wishes.

We wish him sufficient breadth of mind so that his approach to the matter of sovereignty corresponds with the existence of atom bombs.

We wish him a sufficient gift of understanding so that he will view Russians as people and not as a great horde.

We wish him sufficient firmness so that he may convince Mr. Molotov that the United States is not an utterly weak and flabby monster, willing to put up with anything Mr. Molotov or his associates desire.

And of course we wish him luck, because any Secretary of State under the present system is more dependent upon luck than upon good management: he never knows when the Senate may stop payment on any check he passes out to those with whom he is negotiating.

We still believe that it is possible to live in amity with Russia; we do not share the pessimism expressed in Mr. Alexander Baird's article elsewhere in this issue. But we do believe that Mr. Baird's pessimism will be fully justified if our own country continues to be without any vestige of genuine foreign policy. Three things, in our opinion, are needful for working with Russia: understanding, candor and firmness.

A Continuing Scandal

IN THE COMMONWEAL for November 2, 1945, we published an article by Elizabeth Ann Cooper on the subject of the Mexican workers brought

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to this country as maintenance-of-way employees on the railroads. The conditions reported in this article are at the present moment generally worsening all over the country, and unless the whole program is thoroughly investigated by Congress and effective steps are taken to effect radical improvements, we shall be faced with an even worse scandal than that described by Miss Cooper. The present situation is that most of these workers' contracts expire by the middle of this month; many thousands of contracts have already expired. Under the contracts the workers' return journey to Mexico is of course guaranteed. But the workers are now discovering that for one reason or another when their contracts expire they cannot get transportation home.

The result is that some 80,000 Mexicans scattered all over the country are becoming desperate. Scores of them have quit the railroad camps and gone to Washington under their own steam in order to present their grievances to Mexican and American authorities. They arrive in the nation's capital with substantially no resources beside their ancient and battered suitcases and the clothes on their backs. Since the railway companies are not certain exactly how long the present situation will last, they are making no great effort to improve conditions in the work camps, or even to put in adequate supplies of fuel or food. One cannot help suspecting, moreover, that our railroads are perfectly willing to take advantage of the situation in view of the continuing scarcity of common labor all over the country.

It is difficult to assess the blame for this scandalous state of affairs. We are told that the Mexican railroads have not adequate facilities to handle any large number of returning workers on the other side of the border; we are also told that our own railroads are equally incapable of carrying the men to the border, the allegations coming from north and south of the border respectively. Of course we all realize from daily experience that the American railways continue greatly overtaxed, and reports from Mexico indicate that the Mexican lines are in shockingly bad condition. Yet the fact remains that solemn contractual obligations toward the citizens of a friendly neighbor are being largely neglected, and that at the present rate of return, it will be a year at least before all these unfortunate men can rejoin their families. In the meantime, since their contracts have expired and cannot legally be renewed, they can only continue to work for the railroads without any contractual protection, or else risk everything by quitting camp and seeking redress from the authorities—a desperately difficult task in view of linguistic barriers and the meagerness of their resources. Prompt action in Washington is the only thing which can save us from national disgrace.

Tightly, oh more tightly

THERE WAS Christmas Day during the war and the bombs bursting were brighter than the stars, brighter than any stars and if there had been, again, a special star for the shepherds, bright and immediately close above them, they would have thrown themselves down to earth, molded their bodies to the earth, immensely distrustful of anything that interfered with the darkness.

1939, and then you count the years and it was always the same thing; Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with someone trying to do something for the children. That is to say, in Europe, or in China or in Japan, because that is where the war was. The war was not in America and those Americans who were in the war, who spent a Christmas Eve and a Christmas Day in the war, were in Europe or they were on the seas or they were on some island somewhere. And even before 1939 there were the Spanish people with the cold wind in the streets of Madrid having their war Christmas which was like the war Christmas the Poles were to have a little later; and even before 1939 there were the Ethiopians having some sort of a war (mustard gas) Christmas which resembled also the Christmas the Greeks were to have a little later; and here and there, in one country or another, one year or another, there was a Christmas Eve and a Christmas Day without the bombs falling, without the shells bursting, even without machine gun fire, even with something to eat, even with the radiators heating, or wood in the open fire, even with bread baking, in the oven, even with the father and mother sitting together at the table with the children—but there were not so many peacetime Christmases because soon, without having to remember too far back, you were back in 1918: 1918, 1917, 1916, 1915,1914, with the exhausted soldiers crowding in and out of the Gare du Nord in and out of the Gare de l'Est and the trains leaving for the front on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day. And even in 1913 at Christmas time they decorated the windows of the Louvre Department Store with a parade coming down the Champs Elysees, with the toy soldiers marching, the cavalry, the guns, the cuirassiers which had not yet fought the first world war, the cadets of St. Cyr who had not yet entered the first world war wearing their white dress gloves, and so the French, at any rate, already were looking back at wars, at the 1870 war with the Germans, looking back at Napoleon, with a Christmas in Italy a Christmas in Russia, looking back at the hundred Christmases of the hundred years war, looking back until they could not remember any more wars but only the tender pictures of the

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Nativity, the gentle Virgins, which seemed to belong to a world that had nothing to do with wars.

That seemed to be the only thing to do with Christmas; put it away somewhere outside of the wars. With God, also.

★

You cannot put anything away outside of suffering. That has been the trouble with Christmas. No one has been able to put it away in the museums or even in the cathedrals. Because there has been so much suffering. So many wars. Because there is so much suffering even without the wars. Even without the years of the plague and the pestilence that ran all over Europe. Even without the years of the famine. Even without the great fires that burned the cities. There is so much suffering normally and constantly. So long as there is suffering you cannot put Christmas away.

You cannot dismiss even the fragile little tunes, the ones they call traditional in the collections. Not so long as there is any suffering left. They have been sung all over Europe for so many years and it is not that the past was happier. It is only on the Christmas cards that everything is so cheerful. It was never Merrie England nor merrie anything else. Not for long. Not with any security of habit, in anyone, anywhere, for long. The songs that were made for the hope of Christmas were sung in the dark. The bright hope of Christmas was inside a church perhaps with the candles very bright but with the night outside; inside the heart, perhaps, oppressed with disaster.

Before the first Christmas there were not these songs, there were not the statues round the crêche, there was no Chartres, no Amiens, but even then there was the other memory of Eve in the Garden, that no one could get rid of. Until the first Christmas came there was that other memory but no hope in it; it was only a memory. For uncounted years there was so much suffering everywhere and the suffering was made even worse because there was only a memory of a time when there had been no suffering, but the memory held no promise whatever. In the darkness, century after century, with the peoples all over the earth busily engaged in building their histories—but each day a man dies, each day a child is born—there was this light at the very beginning of everything, and someone like Rimbaud would have uttered, ineffectually then, that cry of his *déchirante infortune* and that it was most despairingly sad to have had the one bright instant, the torturing instant of remembered innocence forever lost. Before the first Christmas indeed it was forever lost, but since that day all the memories that men could not get rid of because of the suffering, the memory of Eve, the memory of Bethlehem, promise the recapture of everything that is lost. The strange light of the world's first dawn rising over what indescribable landscape, the clearness, the assurances which were lost but are merged now with the Christmas dawn, and all the stars now are in the heavens permanently, the "army of unalterable law" and there is this light, no longer remembered only in the past but now outside of time entirely. Coinciding with the suffering, linked to the suffering, to everything that is lost.

So that Rimbaud's phrase properly understood means that he had lost nothing forever. That intense misfortune of his, the agony in the season of his travel in hell were as if he were hungry, or in pain, or homeless—his spirit was hungry and hurt and alone—and, deprived of everything, he possessed the plentiude of wealth which is the fulness of suffering.

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You do something for the children, of course, because that is the way knowledge is transmitted; you do what you can so that they may be as happy as you can make them on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day and of course there was the other Child and those to whom He was entrusted did what they could also. There was not very much they could do what with the future that was already determined, and if He had been a child like other children there was really very little use in promising Him anything, because the future was something that would break anyone's heart. And since time did not exist for Him everything was there with Him from the beginning. So that there would have been no use in saying anything in any case. There could only be a continuance of that terrible agreement that was made when the Angel suddenly asked the Virgin Mary to leave history altogether, to come out of the ordinary history of a life which starts and then goes on for a while and then ends and you do what you can with it. And for Saint Joseph also it was the end of any normal plans. But for the children people have had in the nineteen hundred years that have passed since that first Christmas everyone has done everything they could to make them happy in order that they should have something to remember when the suffering starts. When the wars come, or when they are old and ill, or when the heart which never breaks betrays.

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So that Christmas Day is safe and preserved almost everywhere all over the earth in this year of peace because this year of peace is also this year of misery. Held tightly, oh more tightly, in suffering, Christmas is close to all Europe. It is almost as if no one in Europe need ever to be told about Christmas; because no one, not

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certainly the children, need be told about suffering. And if there are any Christians surviving Hiroshima, Christmas Day is safe for them also. (Where people have never heard of Christmas, in all those parts of the world where people have never heard of Christmas, the memory of Eve is safe and although that memory includes no hope it includes man's immense regret, his tortured anxiety.) If anyone has come back to Cassino, Christmas is safe for whoever is standing there looking at his ruined home. It is safe for any exiles. It is completely safe for those hundreds of thousands of persons who have been "displaced"—and homeless, are placed now in the darkest heart of misery.

Wherever there is suffering, Christmas is safe. Or anguish or anxiety.

In Newark, N. J., in the department stores Christmas is not safe. Because the worry there is not exactly like the anguish in the world elsewhere. In Newark they are worried about making sure that Santa Claus will be hygienic. The department store Santa Clauses are to be "inspected" every day; they "must not wipe their noses on their gloves"; there must be no "sputum, no tobacco juice in their beards." Christmas is not safe in the Stock Exchange where values have reached an eight-year high. It is not safe in the buying rush in spite of the graph in *Business Week* which shows that it is going stronger than last year. It is not safe even if we have to wait months more for the new cars—even if we have that anxiety. It is not safe even if we buy "Nuit de Noël" or "Temptation" or "Cupid's Breath" with all the extra taxes on them and spray them on the furs. "Only the finest is fine enough for Christmas"—that's a whisky. Christmas is not safe in America; it is harder to hold to tightly here than anywhere else; it is more imperiled.

We are so pleased, so entirely content. We have made ourselves so entirely separated from the distress which is everywhere else. The famines, the plagues, the wars do not touch us. Americans went to the war and died in the war; so that there are families in innumerable towns and cities in America that are hurt by the war. But that suffering is a private suffering, the loss a private loss. The war did not come to the nation: the red barn, the white steeple, the white fences in Kentucky with the race horses in the fields, the white columns of the houses in New York State—it is all so beautiful and we are closed in that beauty as we are also closed in the beauty of the immense plains, the deserts, the rivers of the land, as we are also closed so perilously to compassion.

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The snow falls on the East River, the snow flakes touch the dark waters where the tide now is swift after the turn—and it is this silent walk along the river as night falls. Manhattan touched by the sea, held in the night. You cannot see into every heart everywhere and into every distress and into all the windows in the tall buildings with the light in them showing through the night and the snow, but there on the island parting the dark swift waters are the hospitals, the three hospitals, the asylum and the place where they put some of the poor, some of the desolate — expectant, prepared, incredibly well prepared for the Nativity.

C. G. PAULDING.

The Soul Is a Terrible Thing

The soul is a terrible thing; it cannot die.
Though it run past the heart's beat and the lung's breath
And cry through all the valleys of endlessness
It cannot find its death.

The soul is a terrible thing, and it has only
One of two destinies:
Up steeps of light that to the eye below
Are too remote, too lonely,
Cliffs of negation where the heart's herb withers,
Solitudes chilled and barren, or a deep
Unknown where midnight wanders in her sleep.
Yet its ascensions open upon wonder,
Plateaus of midday, balconies of sun,
And its last summit cleaves the white air under
The firmament called God, the final One.

Failing to rise the soul can turn and follow
The way of its own willing and be lost,
Crossing somewhere the boundaries of love,
That safe sweet nation of the Holy Ghost.
The soul though born of God can yet be given
To ultimate evil and be one of those
In pain alone preserved
Whom the apt metaphors of Jude enclose:
Wandering stars for whom the storm of darkness
Is forever reserved.

Yet its true destiny confounds all language
Even the mind's profound imagined word
For on the heights of grace it yet may be
The secret chamber of a Deity
Where What is spoken in God, in God is heard
And What is Love proceeds eternally,
Possessing utterly.

Oh, at this mystery that lies within me
I walk indeed with trembling or I stand
Crying God's pities out of His right hand—
That I, so poor a creature, am so favored
With this too precious gift of soul, that I
Bear in so undependable a vessel
This terrible, terrible thing that cannot die.

JESSICA POWERS.

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What Is the Problem in China?

Will China prove to be the Spain of the next war?

Alexander Baird

ON AUGUST 9, 1945, when Russia made her belated entry into the war against Japan, many observers wondered what her price would be for a few days of fighting. On August 27, 1945, when the Russian and Chinese governments announced their 30-year treaty of friendship and alliance, Russia presented the bill.

The treaty was enthusiastically praised in the press and many of the war-weary people of the world thought that the war of nerves in the Far East was over. Article I of the Agreement on Government, in which Russia agreed to recognize China's sovereignty over Sinkiang and Manchuria, states the following, ". . . the Soviet Government is ready to render China moral support and assistance with military equipment and other material resources, this support and assistance to be given fully to the National Government as the Central Government of China."

In the Treaty on Friendship the two governments pledged mutual economic support to aid in rehabilitation of both countries in the postwar period and specifically states in Article V:

> The high contracting parties taking into consideration the interests of security and economic development of both parties agree to work together in close and friendly cooperation after the conclusion of peace and to act according to the principles of mutual respect for their sovereignty and territorial entity and noninterference in the internal affairs of both contracting parties.

While the treaty recognized Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria, it by no means guaranteed it, for under the terms announced, Russia is to have naval bases at Port Arthur, joint control of the port of Dairen (under a Russian chief) and joint control (with a Soviet Managing Director) over the main railway lines of Manchuria which own or control practically the entire industrial resources and a great part of the agricultural production of that area—for the next thirty years. The price of the treaty was high, some might even say exorbitant, but to war-ravaged, politically divided China, it offered the only hope of peace.

But those who recalled the sudden death of the Russo-Polish Pact of 1941 and the mayhem committed on the Yalta Agreement, pointed out that Russia had honored past agreements "more in the breach than the observance." What effect the Russo-Chinese Treaty will have in the long run remains to be seen, but the wording, as in all treaties to which the USSR is a party, is flexible enough to permit Russian reinterpretation from time to time. There is little doubt, however, that the articles of the treaty referred to above, as generally understood in their English translation, have already been violated, in letter as well as in spirit.

While agreeing to deal only with the National Government, which presumably would mean turning over Russian-occupied China to the troops of the Central Government, the USSR has permitted the Chinese communists to infiltrate into North China, Manchuria and Inner Mongolia and has refused entrance to Central Government troops at Manchurian ports. The communists at present hold the corridor to Manchuria and in Mukden show "all signs of settling down for a long stay under Russian auspices." When the Russian troops began their withdrawals in Manchuria, the communists, well organized in those regions, took over. A United Press dispatch of October 2 stated:

> Reliable reports from Manchuria said today that Russian troops were giving captured Japanese guns, ammunition and supplies to Chinese communists. Communists from Hopeh province were filtering through passes in the Great Wall into South Manchuria, where they were being welcomed by the Russians.

It was also reported that thousands of unarmed or poorly equipped Chinese communists were entering Manchuria and returning, not only well armed, but in strongly increased numbers.

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A. T. Steele, in a dispatch to the New York *Herald Tribune* on October 8, reported that the Chinese communists, who give "lip-service to Chiang Kai-shek," entered Manchuria carrying the flag of the National Government with the emblem of the Kuomintang in the corner. The party flag of the Kuomintang was displayed prominently in the streets of Mukden when the communists entered, but soon disappeared. At a time when the Soviet Far Eastern Radio was announcing that troops of the National Govern-

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ment were "assisting in the protection of Manchurian cities," military observers reported that the only troops there wore the armbands of the Eighth Route Army.

The Russians apparently intended to use this technicality as proof that they had fulfilled their obligations under the Russo-Chinese Treaty. This view was confirmed when it was reported a few days ago that Russia had agreed to extend her occupation of Manchuria to permit government troops to take over—for a price. Russia had agreed to carry out her commitments under the treaty, it was alleged, if she received the following concessions from China:

1. Chinese-Russian development of the important Anshan iron and coal mines of Manchuria.
2. Russian navigation rights on the Sungari River of northern Manchuria.
3. Joint Chinese-Russian ownership and operation of all former Japanese and puppet electric enterprises, the Kirin-Hoilungkiang gold mine and the main arsenals of Manchuria.

According to Steffan Andrews in the New York *Times* on November 27, however, Manchuria "is an empty shell whose vast potential has been stripped by the Soviet Army." Two weeks after signing the Russo-Chinese Treaty specially trained experts from Moscow were directly ordered by Generalissimo Stalin to "take everything out of Manchuria that you can move out." What could not be removed was ordered destroyed and by October 20 when the job was finished, "virtually no heavy machinery was left in" the richest frontier province in the Far East. The US Army has copies of crews' orders and numerous photographs of this systematic looting by the Russians.

Russian interference has been evident elsewhere in the Far East as well. While Russia loudly criticizes the United States for not permitting a Far Eastern Commission for Japan with unanimity rule, similar to that which is now bogged down in Germany, Russia is carrying out in Sinkiang, Outer Mongolia and Korea policies similar to those she found so effective in Eastern Europe. Russia was reported to have shipped many of the arsenals of Manchuria to the Russian puppet government of Outer Mongolia nearly two months before a plebiscite promised under the Russo-Chinese Treaty indicated that the people of Outer Mongolia were as eager to be an independent "Peoples' Republic" as had been the people of the Baltic States.

There have also been rumors that the people of Outer Mongolia, like other generous republics under Russian influence, are eager to share their independence with others and have set up at Shangtu a Liberation Committee of the United Mongolian People, the nucleus of the new government proposed for Inner Mongolia.

From Sinkiang, the far western province of Inner Mongolia and the scene of numerous uprisings during the past year, come reports of fighting near the Soviet frontier.

Korea is divided in two and the Soviet occupation authorities in the north have shut off rail transport to the American occupied south and so cut southern Korea off from desperately needed coal. Apart from wholesale looting and raping the Russians openly proclaim in their zone that they have conquered and not liberated Korea. They are reported to be systematically dismantling and removing factory machinery and mining equipment. A "Committee of National Liberation" went into Northern Korea with the Red Army as the "legal government" of that region.

But since the outbreak of civil war in China, public interest has been focused mainly on Russia's fifth column in that country—the Chinese communists. Although General Hurley and others have reported that Russia considers the communists "agrarian reformers," it must be remembered that Russian aggression in predominantly agricultural countries has always been accompanied by agrarian reform programs. In Eastern Europe and more recently in Iran Russian-sponsored political parties have demanded "agrarian reforms." At the time of the October revolution, it should be recalled, the Bolsheviks had a program of agrarian reform of Russia, and in a country such as China, which is 80 per cent agricultural, one could hardly expect a proletarian movement to gain many converts.

It does seem odd, however, that apologists for the Chinese communists and others who are mortally afraid of offending the Soviet Union insist that here are "just agrarian reformers," since the communists themselves have been very frank in stating their aims. In "China's New Democracy" Mao Tse-tung, Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party and onetime member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, wrote:

> It is evident that if the present society of China is colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal in character, the process of China's revolution must be divided into two steps. The first step is to change the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal form of society into an independent democratic society, while the second step is to push the revolution forward to establish a socialist society. What we are carrying on now is the first step of the Chinese revolution.

Mao also warned, "Whoever dares to act against this direction shall not be able to accomplish his work, and he himself shall find his head broken."

The myth of Chinese communist "agrarian reform" rests on hearsay evidence and the prejudiced testimony of pro-communist visitors to

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Yenan. Steffan Andrews witnessed such agrarian reforms in Kalgan and while impressed with the "tremendous good" in the program, went on to say (New York *Times,* November 1, 1945):

> But the price in terms of personal liberties that the communists exact for these reforms is staggering. As soon as they take over a town they kill off independent thought, set up rigid press control, let loose an army of secret police and shoot all political opponents who might even attempt to dissent.
>
> The democracy and "people's" government they set up would be considered sheer dictatorship by any American standard. There is no freedom. Freedom means only freedom to conform to the party line. If you conform, you are a democrat; if you don't, you are a traitor.

As far back as 1927 the Chinese communists betrayed the Kuomintang (the communists belonged to the left wing of that party) and tried to overthrow the National Government by force. They started a bloody revolt intended to involve China in a war against Great Britain and the United States as a result of outrages committed by communist gunmen in Nanking and Shanghai. At the same time, the Russians, outwardly friendly toward the Chinese Government and pretending to assist it in its difficult reorganization task, collaborated closely with the communists. The revolt was suppressed by the government and the Russian advisers Borodin and Gallen, alias Bluecher, were compelled to leave China.

★

The problems the Republic of China has faced since its inception in 1911, after the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty, have been unequaled in the history of any modern state. That government inherited a country deeply scarred by 268 years of ultra-conservative Manchu rule, followed by the dictatorship of the restoration-minded Yuan Shihk'ai. Only four years after the revolution in 1911 the Japanese tried to force the 21 demands on China which would have made it a vassal state. Four years later at the Versailles Conference, foreign powers tried to give Shantung, the sacred province of China, to Japan. In 1931 Japan invaded China and added the three Northeastern Provinces (Manchuria) to her empire.

In 1934 the Chinese communists were driven from south of the Yangtze to the province of Shensi where they consolidated their position during the next two years, establishing their capital at Yenan. And in 1937, after China's rapacious war lords had been suppressed by Chiang Kai-shek, a Constitutional Assembly was called to adopt one of the most democratic constitutions in the world. Even the Chinese communists in September of that year dissolved their Soviet government and pledged to take orders from the National Military Council and to disown and discontinue "the policy of insurrection which aims at the overthrow of the Kuomintang political power, the policy of land confiscation and the policy of communist propaganda." When the Japanese launched their full-scale war against China later in 1937, consideration of the constitution had to be postponed.

Under the pretense of fighting with the National Government against the Japanese the communists began to expand their territory by exploiting the political and military difficulties of the National Government. Clashes between communist and Central Government troops were frequent and from their headquarters in the northwest border region, the communists expanded into Hopei, Shantung, Shansi, Anhwei, Kiangsu and Hupeh. They captured towns from the Japanese and took over regions the Japanese abandoned, but they also wrested territory from the National Government. In "Vigil of a Nation," Lin Yutang, at one time sympathetic to the communists, has this to say, "For every Japanese they claim to have killed, they have killed at least five Chinese. For every town they have captured from the Japanese, they have captured fifty towns from other Chinese. Of the hundreds of 'clashes' per year they claim to their credit, a fair percentage must include those with the Chinese 'enemy' . . . half of their weapons have been robbed from other Chinese guerrillas and regular units."

The words of Mao Tse-tung, Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, confirm the statement of Dr. Lin. In October, 1937, when the Eighteenth Group Army left Yenan for north Shansi, he gave the following directive to a meeting of the communist political workers (*The Communist,* late 1937):

> The Sino-Japanese war affords our Party an excellent opportunity for expansion. Our fixed policy should be seventy percent expansion, twenty percent dealing with the Kuomintang, and ten per cent resisting Japan. There are three stages in carrying out this fixed policy: the first is a compromising stage, in which self-sacrifice should be made to show our outward obedience to the Central Government and adherence to the Three People's Principles [nationality, democracy and livelihood as outlined by Dr. Sun Yat-sen] but, in reality this will serve as camouflage for the existence and development of our Party.
>
> The second is a contending stage, in which two or three years should be spent in laying the foundation of our Party's political and military powers, and developing these until we can match and break the Kuomintang, and eliminate the influence of the latter north of the Yellow River. While waiting for an unusual turn of events, we should give the Japanese invader certain concessions.
>
> The third, is an offensive stage, in which our forces should penetrate deeply into Central China, sever the communications of the Central Government's troops in various sectors, isolate and disperse them until we are ready for the counter-offensive and wrest the leadership from the hands of the Kuomintang.

Among their ideological brethren the world

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over, the Chinese communists, it is apparent, minced no words about their aims. But they carefully built up a myth for the "innocent abroad." They pose as downtrodden patriots and model reformers seeking to escape from the tyranny and oppression of the "Fascist" Chiang Kai-shek. Fellow-travelers of all nationalities—the same people who called Roosevelt a "warmonger" until 1941 when Russia was attacked by Germany—characterized them as "democratic" and as "agrarian reformers" eager to cooperate with the Central Government that set up a blockade against them and hoarded lend-lease weapons for civil war.

★

The Chinese communists made fantastic military claims which were echoed by communist fronts all over the world. They claimed to have held back 69 per cent of the Japanese troops, yet the communist armies never held any large city or accepted any major battle during the Sino-Japanese War. There were no communists in the battles of Taierchwang, Ishang, the four battles of Changsha, the battle for the "rice bowl" at Tung Ting Lake, the battle of the Salween, the battles in Burma and in Hunan.

Although the communists frequently complained of lack of equipment, they never complained about the size of their armies. In 1944 the communists estimated their forces at 470,000, but the head of an American military mission that returned from Yenan in the spring of 1945, put the total number of communist troops at only 250,000. These were scattered over a tremendous area, however, and the largest number that could be unified into an army was only about 30,000—and those badly equipped.

Ill-clad, ill-fed, ill-equipped, the armies of Chiang Kai-shek fought the Japanese for eight long years. They survived blockade by the Japanese and sabotage by the communists. American lend-lease equipment was sent to the National Government because the armies of Chiang Kai-shek fought the Japanese and the communists didn't. Yet, until VE Day only one-half of one per cent of all lend-lease trickled into China.

In a V-J Day speech Chiang Kai-shek promised his people those democratic reforms for which they had waited so long, but he made clear that the "employment of armed force in political controversy and the seizure of territory in defiance of government orders" would not be tolerated by the National Government. He promised the communists fair treatment if they would "submit to recognition by the government."

There is nothing in the post-war program of Chiang Kai-shek to which sincere patriots could not agree; yet it is obvious that the communists are negotiating with Chungking now, only because it gives them time to consolidate their position in North China, Inner Mongolia and Manchuria and to prepare for civil war against the National Government. While the "dictatorial" Generalissimo still hopes to persuade the communist leaders in Chungking to cooperate, communist troops are tearing up hundreds of miles of precious railways, blowing up railway stations and bridges and encircling airdromes and strategic ports in Manchuria.

★

If Russia keeps the agreement she made with the Central Government a few days ago and extends her occupation until the beginning of January in order to turn Manchuria over directly to troops of the Central Government, the civil war may end very soon in favor of Chungking. Barring extensive outside aid, the communist armies cannot hope to challenge the National forces successfully. Chiang Kai-shek's troops are superior in number, equipment and training and are still receiving lend-lease from America. Once transport difficulties are overcome the Central Government will probably regain Manchuria and most of northern China.

Unless the Central Government continues to receive the support of the United States Government, the future of independent China is not at all optimistic. It is interesting to note that while the Central Government pins its faith on the Russo-Chinese Treaty, the Chinese communists, who are much more realistic, seem to take the Program of the Communist International much more seriously. In "China's New Democracy," Mao Tse-tung states:

> . . . we cannot separate ourselves from the assistance of the Soviet Union or from the victory of the anti-capitalist struggles of the proletariat of Japan, Great Britain, the United States, France and Germany. Their victories help us. Although we cannot say that victory in China must be preceded by the success of revolutions of the above countries, or at least in one or two of the above countries, it is doubtless that we can only win our victory with their assistance. This is especially true of the aid of the Soviet Union, an indispensable condition for the final victory of China's war of resistance. To refuse Soviet aid will surely bring about the failure of the revolution. Is this not clear in the lesson of China's anti-Soviet movement after 1927? Is it not a dream to expect that China can establish a bourgeois society ruled by her own bourgeoisie after the victory of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles, in a period when the world is in the midst of wars and revolutions and when socialism is destined to prosper?

Presumably this is based on the "Program of the Communist International" which was adopted at the forty-sixth session of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in Moscow on September 1, 1928. This program, which has never been repudiated by that body nor by the Russian Communist Party, has this to say

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of China and other colonial and semi-colonial countries:

> . . . The principal tasks in such countries are, on the one hand, to fight against feudalism and the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and to develop systematically the peasant agrarian revolution; on the other hand, to fight against foreign imperialism and for national independence. As a rule, transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in those countries will be possible only through a series of preparatory stages, as the outcome of a whole period of transformation of bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist revolution, while in the majority of cases, successful socialist construction will be possible only if direct support is obtained from the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship is established.

In the light of Russia's long-range plans for world revolution, and her present imperialist strategy, any agreement which Russia signs is open to suspicion. Collaboration *à la Russe* has proved to be merely a convenient front for Russian imperialism and those who would make it one of the cornerstones of peace are building at best on shifting sands, at worst on dynamite.

We by no means concur with Mr. Baird's very pessimistic conclusion, as is clear from our editorial on page 252, yet we feel that his documentation deserves public attention. THE EDITORS.

"Do Not Be Hopeless, We Are Returning"

CHARLOTTE T. MURET

WE ARE OFF to Europe again after six years' absence. The ship sails at midnight; there is a crowd, as usual, but none of the happy bustle, none of the care-free *au revoirs* of the holiday trips of old. All of us have a serious reason for going to Europe today.

Our ship, the *John Ericsson,* was once the *Kungsholm,* and carried a few select passengers on pleasure cruises in southern seas. Now it is a troop ship, and though it condescends to take three hundred carefully selected civilians to Europe, it is conditioned for the seven thousand soldiers whom it will bring back on its return trip.

There is no luxury. We are eleven in our cabin, and we share a single bath. The water is cold—but we are lucky to have it, for on the return trip there will be none. Only one small saloon is available for the three hundred of us when the weather is rough, and deck chairs are rare and rickety. There is no real hardship, however, and we are gorged on the best of food.

Everyone on the *John Ericsson* is either going over to serve or returning home. In the first category is the tall YWCA man sent to help two or three million "displaced persons" — Poles, Italians, Jugoslavs, Czechs and so on, who are wandering about Europe unable for political reasons to return to their homes. The State Department is sending over a batch of young people to various legations. Very naïve they are, in spite of their good manners. How will they get on in the chaos of present Europe, and what impressions will they have?

Two very old people, an ancient, half-blind French lady, and a sturdy old Englishman, are touching because, hard as the trip is on their infirmities, they are determined not to die in exile. The saddest figure on board is a wounded French officer. He has been living in comfort in Chicago with his American wife, but the moment that it was possible he was on fire to return, whatever the risks to his weakened heart. His grief at the plight of France has made him like a man flayed alive; every word has power to wound. Praise of England or Russia he feels as a reflection on France, pity for Greece or Poland is invidious, and an unconscious jealousy has made him critical of everything American. I hope there are few so sensitive in France itself.

In contrast with these pathetic cases are most of the passengers, returning refugees—they are dauntlessly hopeful. These refugees have often seemed to us difficult, carping, ungrateful while they were in America, but somehow they have kept courage and resolution alive in their hearts, and they are taking back these qualities to the reconstruction of their countries. Here is a middle aged man, an average father of a family, who was a manager of a thriving chemical works. He was born in Russia, but his wife is a model of the best type of French bourgeoise; thrifty, intelligent, hardworking, a help to her husband at home and in the laboratory. The couple are as much in love as any young people, and they had built up a good life for themselves and their children. The war ruined all. The father, mother and daughter escaped to America, and the son has spent the last four years dodging the Gestapo and working for the Resistance. Now the family are to be reunited, and this sixty-year-old father is so happy in the reunion, so proud of his son, that it seems nothing to him to start life from scratch a third time.

Another man in middle age was once a well known dealer in antiquities. He is gentle, refined, distinguished, and in his house he received such men as the Russian writer, Merejskowsky, and the liberal leader, Miliukov. Today he cares little for things, however beautiful; he scarcely thinks of the treasures he has lost; he is glad to go back to France, however hard conditions may be. When I say that the Parisian milieu as we knew it cannot be recreated in our generation he laughs at me. "The French," he says, "will always want to talk. There will be salons, even if they are in barns or factories."

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A Dutchman who sits near me on deck is going back to take help to his own small community. He tells me with pride that on opening his valise he found a note from his fourteen-year-old son. "Father," it reads, "you have often said to me that where there is a will there is a way. Now I say it to you: have Courage." "He is right," adds the father, simply.

A Czech patriot in the prime of life is going home, although he has no idea what he will find. He is a man of unusual energy and vitality, who has made a success of a new and difficult business —that of patent lawyer—in Canada, but he is confused and bitter. He toys with the idea of turning cynic. "I saved many people in the underground," he tells me, "and when I left my country I took twenty out with me. They were all grown men and they knew that they owed me their lives, yet during these six years eighteen of them have tried to do me an injury. I do not understand." He is still young enough to be astonished at human ingratitude, but he is an idealist, as his very distress proves, and a born fighter. His confusion and bitterness will pass, and he will accomplish something.

How happy is the Czech woman who was condemned to be hung for her underground activities, and whose husband and brothers were in Buchenwald. She has been very active in America, and now she is going back to join her family, who have escaped miraculously—even the young son whom she has not seen since he was seven.

Even the table steward, whose regard for our comfort makes us cherish for a moment the illusion that we are important, is a Norwegian refugee. He is a mine of information as to the *mores* of the doughboy, whom he looks on as a kind of super-child. His farm and family have disappeared, but he is used to the ways of a cruel world. He has his own opinion of the Swedes, but otherwise he is entirely tolerant.

The most inspiring person on board is a young Frenchman who was with the Bank of Indo-China in Saigon. Disgusted with the attitude of the Vichy administration, he managed to escape and get as far as Manila, where he was overtaken by the events of Pearl Harbor. For a year or more he was left at liberty in the Philippines, and he saw them, as very few Americans had the opportunity to do, under Japanese rule. "It is quite true that the Filipinos like the Americans," he tells me. "When I was forced to wear a red arm band to show that I was an enemy alien the Filipino women in the market would take me for an American, and they would slip up to me and fill my little basket with fruit and vegetables." Later he was put into a concentration camp where he nearly died of hunger and ill treatment, yet today he is serene, sane and hopeful.

"My experience," he says, "has given me as it were a second youth. I feel that I am starting all over again, my whole life is ahead of me, as it was when I set out for the Orient eight years ago."

This is the kind of man whom Europe needs, and there are others like him among these returning exiles. They know that they will have to face resentment and jealousy, that they will often be told: "You were not here when we were starving. You were warm while we froze." Yet they are ready and eager to go to work and help rebuild.

Presently the ship docks at Le Havre, which stands, our first sign of Europe, a symbol of the destruction and ruin which we must face today. The vision is appalling, yet behind these gaunt façades, these piles of rubble and fallen walls, lies the gentle, green French country-side. Is not this, too, symbolic of the fact that in Europe while much is gone forever, much still remains with which to build? This journey has for each of us a meaning beyond personal satisfaction. The time has not yet come for the carefree tourist to return to Paris, to Vienna, to the Riviera, or to wander curiously among Europe's ruins, but there is room for those who want to help and to understand.

On Christmas Eve

The holly and the ivy
Now both are fully grown . . .

We went to the woods that day looking for
Christmas berries, so the child said. The woods
Were oak, blackhaw, sycamore, hickory—
No red berries, we knew. But the sunlight
Slept on snow, it was carol-weather, bright
As the holly and ivy. The child said berries
Were bound to be somewhere, up the hill, over
The frozen brook, and we went. The woods were
Winter-and-wind-bent, arcs, angles,
Black on the sky, and below in counterpoint
Lines of shadow, old formal music.
But the dogs racing were making new circles
Deeper than shadow, more transitory, wreathing
And interweaving, lacing, new harmony;
Our voices threaded the cold, fading
Sooner than footprints. We walked in mazes,
Lines on lines wheeling about us, meeting
Overhead, underfoot—branches' iron,
Fine bird-arrows, dog-print-petals. We laughed,
Ran downhill, laughed, were safe a moment,
As if five-barred fences held the whole world.
We forgot loss, forgot our ages
And why we had come—all but the child who
All the way home still hoped, still sought
Among oakwoods, blackhaw, sycamore, hickory,
The berry as red as blood, the miracle.

JOYCE HORNER.

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Communications

CHRISTMAS LEPER FUND

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In sponsoring its annual Lepers' Christmas Appeal The Society for the Propagation of the Faith stresses primarily the motives for contributing. The most abject of men, outcasts of humanity who are in many cases abandoned in desolate places to a living death, lepers are remembered only by Him, Whose Birthday is cerebrated on December 25th.

The work of our Divine Saviour did not end with His Ascension into heaven; it has been continued by the missionaries of the Church He instituted and their labors are supported by the prayers and alms of the faithful.

To insure the enjoyment of the blessings of this Holy Season, send an offering for the Lepers' Christmas Fund to your Diocesan Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith or to the National Office, 109 E. 38th Street, New York, 16, N. Y. Donations of any amount will be gratefully received and distributed among missionaries laboring among the lepers.

The Right Reverend THOMAS J. MCDONNELL,
National Director.

GOOD NEIGHBORS IN BOXCARS

Havre de Grace, Md.

TO the Editors: In the November 2nd issue of THE COMMONWEAL is an article entitled "Good Neighbors in Boxcars" by Elizabeth Ann Cooper. I should like to challenge Miss Cooper's opinion of a "needlessly bungled job." Since Miss Cooper has based her ideas about the treatment of the Mexicans on what she observed in the Mexican railway laborers' camp in Metuchen, N. J., I shall use as my reference what I saw at the camp here at Havre de Grace, Maryland.

These men have not been mistreated by the railroad. They are not required to live in "boxcars." The buildings in which they live are spacious, comfortable, and very much like American army barracks. They are well-ventilated, well-lighted, and clean. About seventy-five men are housed in a group of twelve bungalows. One building has washstands, mirrors, and showers and another is used as a mess hall. The recreation room is provided with suitable magazines, published in the Mexicans' own language. The steward in charge of these buildings is responsible for their cleanliness. Every thirty days the camp must stand inspection by state health authorities and the railroad medical examiners. Besides the recreation facilities at the camp the men were offered the use of the local baseball field; a number of their better players were asked to join the local team. In the winter they were provided with a place to play soccer, a popular game in Mexico. These Mexicans were given many opportunities to learn the English language. They had two interpreters and night classes, at railroad expense, were offered at the public school. Many of the men took advantage of this opportunity.

In addition to working on the railroad the Mexicans were given a chance to make extra money by working on farms and in the cannery at the usual wages paid there. Miss Cooper states that the food of these Mexicans is intolerable. Here at Havre de Grace the Mexicans receive the best of food. During the war the Mexicans were getting the best cuts of meat available. At a camp dinner held for some of the prominent men of the town, the food was most enjoyable, and no one could say, as did Miss Cooper, that "worms were literally crawling over the meat."

The Mexican railway laborers are paid exactly the same wages as the other workers in that region, including overtime. When they receive their checks the interpreter, a former Jesuit student, here at Havre de Grace stands at their side to make sure they receive everything that is due them. What could be fairer than this? If there are any mistakes, surely the Mexican involved could explain it to the interpreter and have the matter straightened out.

In the tragic incident of the workers being trapped between the two trains and killed, Miss Cooper gives the impression that the railroad alone was at fault. From the description she gives, it seems to me that the foreman is at fault. The railroad placed him there for the protection of the workers. The safety rules of the railroad state that where one man or any group of men is working a "whistle man" must be provided to warn the workers of any approaching trains. Surely it is not the fault of the railroad if the "whistle man" fails to do his duty.

As a last proof that these men are not mistreated, I should like to say that when the time comes for them to leave here, they are reluctant to go; a number of them return and renew their permission to remain for a longer time.

In her final paragraph Miss Cooper says, "Yet we still have some time to make some amends for what we—*all of us*—have inflicted on these citizens of our neighbor to the south." I see no reason for the Pennsylvania Railroad, nor the United States as a whole, to make apologies to the Mexican government for the treatment of the laborers who came here. Maybe Metuchen, N. J., and the railroad officers who ran that camp have reason for apology, but why generalize from a single case?

Enclosed you will find an article by Mr. Leo Moore, the editor of the *Democratic Ledger,* which he published after a visit to the Mexican camp at Havre de Grace. My statements on the conditions here are verified by his article.

CATHERINE M. SPRAGG.

It is interesting to read Miss Spragg's account of conditions at the Havre de Grace camp. Perhaps they are now as she reports them only because they were at one time so bad that open insurrection threatened and an official of the Mexican Embassy had to journey there to read the men the riot act. No one pretends that all *the camps are bad; in certain instances generous-hearted local citizens have done a great deal. Miss Cooper's article was based not alone on her personal experiences but on interviews with persons who have traveled the country over investigating the camps and who read and approved what she wrote.* THE EDITORS.

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The Stage & Screen

The Mermaids Singing

JOHN VAN DRUTEN'S version of Prufrock gives us a middle-aged playwright set down in an hotel in any town on the road, simultaneously nursing his current show and his ego, and wearing, I should say, the most voluminous trousers I have ever seen. Although, of course, this latter detail may be an evasion of Walter Abel's own in his interpretation of the character, rather than any outright direction of the dramatist's, sprung from the Eliot poem. In any case, the procedure makes for a long, dragging, empty evening, with considerably less craft on view than is usual with a van Druten scheme. Or rather, with considerably more craft on view as there was nothing to compass it. It is true certainly that Mr. van Druten has not so far emerged as a man-with-a-message and has given no evidences of pretension in that line. His excellencies, and these are of esthetic as well as commercial caliber, depend upon what the intelligentsia are pleased to term "theatricality" rather than any adult intellection. His own director, and a superb one, he casts generally with extreme care and daring; composes, I imagine, his own ground-plan; possesses an astute feeling for "gesture" and "business" as opposed to "lines"; and will cut, I feel sure, to the size, capabilities and rehearsal discoveries of his actors and of his own to a certain sure extent undreamed of by other practicing wrights. With two further offerings in lights: one a big adaptation "movied" on to the stage ("I Remember Mama"), the other a small, skilful, finessed attraction, certainly tailored to its original cast ("Voice of the Turtle"), I suppose it is enough to say that this present piece comes off merely as unlucky van Druten, but still I think there is a little more to it than that. The story of an agreeable sophisticate, married although accustomed to extra-marital arrangements, who is fairly surprised at attracting and being attracted by a suburban young girl, only to renounce the scheme out of convenience rather than virtue, it was interesting to note that the play seemed to tap neither conviction nor interest from the audience, nor certainly rage, nor any of the fashionable guilt reactions. The story was too old and drab and familiar, a matter of practice rather than reality. It seems to me that from now on, writers of the kind of resolute superficiality as that capitalized by Mr. van Druten will be hard put to it to find subjects to show, and while it is necessary to record him at present as having built a silly business, it is also necessary to reflect on what other kind of business he could be expected to build. Even personality stuff in this exact age must develop comment at least if the characters are to appear any way alive. It looks to me as though Mr. van Druten will be driven to conjure period pieces in the future, which, as a matter of fact, is the only adequate definition of his present one.

A word for Beatrice Pearson whose playing of the ingénue seemed to me a surprising delight. Far and away

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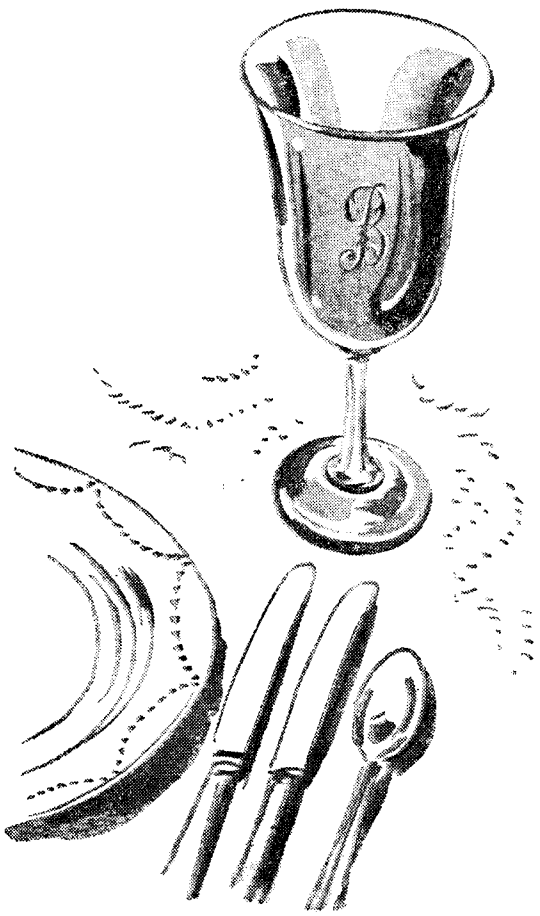

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more attractive than last season, she provided the evening's only excuse, and I thought her entire conception of the rôle sensitive. She still has to learn that she has arms as well as fourteen pairs of hands, and her speech seems to have a slight defect, a lisp I think, which may prevent her from more mature work. But as she is obviously not afraid of work, this will be, I judge, only a temporary level. Walter Abel, as nice as he is, comes off colorless in the dull lead. Also, and unfortunately for this particular part, he seems unable to listen on the telephone. One doesn't know, of course, whether Mr. Abel uses the wires in this hurling fashion in so-called real life, but on the stage, it is obvious that he is talking to no one from somewhere with nothing to say. Very odd. Raymond Sovey's settings seemed less nicely adjusted than usual. (*At the Empire.*)

Strange Fruit

IF AN exchange of playwrights could have been effected between the two mentioned this week, I think this adaptation of Lillian Smith's serious novel might have been wholly satisfactory, rather than the alternately moving and tiresome affair that it is. There is no question that Miss Smith could have used not some but *all* of Mr. van Druten's technical virtuosity in rearing a difficult job to the stage, and I do not think it is to her credit to have sprawled her entire book thereon with a good deal of strange device and no choice whatsoever. If the theater as practiced on Broadway has a mean history, the theater as a form has a noble one, and surely this project, if any, deserved the advantages of knowledge and skilled working. In any case, what travels the boards of the Royale at present is a kind of page-by-page fitting of the story of the lynching of an innocent Negro boy, and of the events leading up to it. Set in the town of Maxwell, Georgia, we see as much of the town as possible, meet as many of its people, some of whom forward the action, a good many of whom do not. The piece has twelve scenes, seven of them different, and a cast of thirty-four. In this plethora, the love-affair of Tracy Dean (weak white youth) and Nonnie Anderson (gentle educated Colored girl), the chief motivation, is spread very thin indeed. I think Miss Smith's large mistake was in vacillating between a drama and a document. Supplying a good many extra people, for purposes of local color very likely, she has at the same time tried to characterize them by giving each one a small master-gesture or master-emotion, or equivalent business, and having them enter and exit endlessly. It will be imagined how this process slows the action and how the important characters—Tracy's mother for instance, his sister, even Nonnie herself—are smothered by it. This is not to say that there are not rewarding individual scenes: two of the most moving being the childhood one of Tracy and the fated Henry, played out by two little boys; and Sam Perry's (the Colored Doctor's) final breakdown in the office of the white Mr. Harris. The first of these, necessarily employing a dream-device of lighting for its believability, is an honest example of stage contrivance quarreling with the projection of a realistic theme. As touching as it was, as beautifully played, it still should have been cut for the good of the whole, else differently, theatrically, schemed. A further novelist's blunder will be the river-side love scene which, while opening with a certain amount of intensity, descended into nostalgia, and scattered nowhere. Nostalgia, the "do-you-remember?" attack, so successful in life and books, will not work on the stage, I think. It is unactable. Or, if acted, it becomes something else.

Finally, a good many of the performances, particularly among the minor people, seemed to me fine. All the children were notable, and I was especially struck with Edna Thomas's few moments. The evening's honors go, of course, to Juano Hernandez's reading of Sam, already street history I imagine. For the two principals, I thought Jane White's Nonnie exact as to feeling, but as she has obviously no experience and is unable to project, I missed a good number of her few lines. Melchor Ferrer's Tracy seemed to me an uncertain business, over-directed and often labored. (*At the Royale.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

Made in England

SINCE the English are getting a little sensitive about their films, especially as box-office attractions in the United States, it might be well to look over the latest batch. With some Americans, especially those who are tired of Hollywood opulence and glamour, English movies have long been popular—not only such spectacles in sentiment as "In Which We Serve," but also such minor pictures as "Thunder Rock" and "48 Hours" which had something unusual to say and said it without drooling in glitter and extravagance. Unfortunately none of these four new productions come up to these "bests," so they are by no means the last word in English films—but they are what is being shown on our screens and their producers hope they will get attention from patrons.

"Johnny in the Clouds" should have been made two years ago or ten years later. It opens in the present with scenes of a deserted airfield in Great Britain, and consists mainly of one long flashback to the days in 1940 when the RAF was very busy there and, as the story progresses, to 1942 when American fliers took over the field. Through a series of intimate touches, a couple of love stories and a great many Anglo-American episodes, it means to show what life was like in the air corps and how the fliers (and civilians) of two countries got together to fight a common enemy, learned to respect each other and finally to like each other. It is very slow in the telling and full of English expressions like "Bad show!" and English understatement contracted with American bravado and bad manners. Unfortunately for our side, the English leading characters are better portrayed by Michael Redgrave and John Mills than are the two Americans, played by Douglass Montgomery, whose artificial mannerisms are not typically American, and Bonar Colleano, whose exhibitions of high spirits and crudeness probably are. However, for the sake of amity, Colleano's realistic performance as an American boor and Terence Rattigan's screenplay, at this point at least, might have been toned down a bit. And for the sake of good

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theater, Anthony Asquith's direction could stand some speeding up. More successful than the film's earnest but fumbling efforts at Anglo-American goodwill (greatly helped by lovely Rosamund John as the manager of the inn where the airmen gather) is its sane message to people weeping for the fallen: grieve not, but feed my children.

Although it also covers the war years, *"Vacation from Marriage"* manages to be more timely because it discusses a theme that is always of interest: what to do about a marriage that is going on the rocks through sheer boredom. Its answer is one that doctors frequently recommend to any patient suffering from ennui: take a vacation. This picture, carefully produced and cleverly directed by Alexander Korda, tells the story of a drab bookkeeper (Robert Donat) and his mousy wife (Deborah Kerr) who are dragged out of their comfortable but dull groove by the war. He goes into the Navy; she becomes a Wren. The excitement of battle, new faces, new ideas, plus the admiration of a nurse (Ann Todd) for him, of an architect (Roland Culver) for her, produce changes in each of them that are wonderful to behold. When the time comes for a leave, neither can stand returning to the "guinea pig hutch" from which they departed three years ago. They return, however, to discuss divorce; and the outcome of the meeting is as might be expected. Clemence Dane and Anthony Pelissier have written a script that is bright and amusing; Director Korda has guided Donat and Kerr through this humorous satire with a deft hand that avoids the extremes of caricature or whimsy but still includes plenty of light touches. Glynis Johns, as the wife's pal in the Wrens, is a delight. My favorite scene is the one in which the husband and wife meet to battle it out; he admits he may have been cut and dried, but he denies that he was a dithering old maid; and she refuses to be called a dowdy old frump.

"The Man in Grey" is a beautifully produced costume picture that trudges dully along for reel after reel until all of a sudden it goes berserk in a melodramatic swoosh of hissing revenge, illicit love, a brutal fight and two vicious murders. One of the Brontë girls might have thought up this plot—but she would have given it some meaning. However, even meaning wouldn't save this absurdly romantic story with its confused morals and motivations. Clarissa (Phyllis Calvert), lonely in her loveless marriage to a Marquis (James Mason), who broods like Heathcliffe but is an awful cad, befriends her old schoolchum (Margaret Lockwood) who immediately starts to work on the Marquis and encourages Clarissa's love for an actor (Stewart Granger). But the costumes and sets were certainly handsome; and so are the four people wasted on these leading rôles. I wish I knew how the English people, who frequently protest Hollywood representations of the English, were taking this English impersonation of themselves.

"The Seventh Veil" is really a modern interpretation of the old Trilby story, and, except for the hokum at the very end, has a fascinating appeal. I found the psychoanalysis approach used in the first three-quarters of the film an unnatural method of story telling; for, as the heroine reveals her past to the psychiatrist we get only her version of the characters who surround her. She is well and fully portrayed, but her guardian (again played by the dour James Mason), the orchestra leader with whom she fell in love (Hugh McDermott), the artist with whom she wanted to run away (Albert Lieven) are rather shadowy figures seen only through her exposition until she finishes talking about the events that led to her attempt at suicide. The absorbing screenplay, written by Muriel and Sydney Box, concentrates on the young girl who came to live with her moody guardian, was developed into a first-rate pianist, then was frustrated in two love affairs by her strange mentor who also managed to instil in her an overpowering fear of hurting her hands. Sydney Box's production is excellent. As might be expected in a plot in which music is important, the piano playing is exceedingly good and so are the sequences showing the heroine performing with the London Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Muir Mathieson). Ann Todd, in the difficult rôle of the unhappy, sensitive girl dominated by her guardian, gives a characterization that vibrates with sincerity. She is indeed an English cinema actress from whom we may expect much. I hope the theme of her next picture is closer to the norm, for "The Seventh Veil" at times taxes our credulity. However, the film is entertaining, and its cast, under the direction of Compton Bennett, succeeds in holding us throughout the imaginative tale. Admirers of English films will understand why producers want to attract box-office receipts, but they can still rejoice that these films are not yet aping Hollywood too closely.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Significant City

ANNE FREMANTLE

"DAY and Night, Night and Day" crooned a deep voice into the microphone, and the police below tried to prevent some four thousand or more young people from stampeding the platform, where a slight, wispy, boyish figure leaned slightly backwards and flung his hands out, palms upward, as he sang. His worshippers did not hush to hear their hero; sighs, groans, imploring cries of "Frankie" in swooning voices, were luckily drowned by the amplified song. It was of Stalingrad I thought as I listened to Sinatra, of the seventy days and nights, nights and days, which Simonov describes.* For the "bobby-socks brigade," the "teen-agers" now so close to the hearts of advertisers, are separated by months only from the defenders of that city. They are of the same generation.

The greatest difficulty in writing, as in any other art, is always to create significance, for, in art, the symbol is more than the life—or rather, unless the life become symbol, it perishes, dying avorted. You can choose either to be a romantic, and squeeze this essential significance from your creatures themselves, from their existence and their actions, their relationships and their sayings; or you can return to the classical tradition—as Simonov has done—and have your significance proceed *ex machina* from some tremendous outside force, be it fate, or history, or God. But, immanent or transcendent, the significance must be there, or you will have but photography for painting, reporting instead of literature, and modeling for sculpture. Soviet writing has hitherto so reeked of propaganda that the scent of its significance was pretty generally smothered. It was nearly always there—even in such plays as Bulgakov's "The White Guard," or the experimental "White Sea Canal" or "And Quiet Flows the Don," for it is a part of the genius of the Russian people, as a people, to achieve a constant and a concrete significance in a way few others have. (It is hard to predicate significance, for example, of the Bulgarian people, or of the Persian, in the same sense; for such national significance comes from tremendous historical integration. The Chinese people have it supremely; the Indo-Chinese or the Indian, almost not at all; the French have it, the Moroccans have it not.)

Mr. Simonov has produced a work of genius—that is to say, a significant book—about a city and a people in themselves significant, and most tremendously so at the time of which he writes. A nation or a city can be "in history," as a woman is with child, or an author "in book"; and as the Spartans at Thermopylae, so the Russians at Stalingrad, have become a symbol for all the peoples of all time. Mr. Simonov has chosen for his characters a handful of officers and men, who seized and held three apartment houses in the beleaguered city, chased the Germans from house to house, and were chased in their turn (on the Sabbath day as upon all others!), with let-ups of a few hours' sleep snatched between bombardments and machine gunning; with a few days when wounded in a hovel in which to learn love and enjoy it, with battle, murder and sudden death for beginning and middle and end of his setting. And he is successful through technique so brilliant that it becomes a virtue in almost a theological sense. For virtue is knife-edged: hope balanced between presumption and despair; courage between audacity and cowardice, charity and prudence only limitless. Mr. Simonov, with a little more horror, more detail, more monotony, would have become boring; with more warmth, nobility, humanity, generosity, gaiety, gallantry, would have strayed into sentimentality. As it is, his account is flawless: action without introspection, true love without benefit of sleeping-bags or a rabbit, and a continual sense, *pace* Robert Browning, of a high that is never too high, and a heroic not too hard for earth, because earth survives by her hardness no less than by her softness, by her frozen winter crust as by her warm summer womb.

The conversations are always memorable, and the translation is so good one forgets completely that it is one: Joseph Barnes has not only rewritten Simonov in admirable, idiomatic English, he has also re-thought him, so that there are no alien turns of phrase, no uncouth constructions, no feeling that these are foreigners talking and living.

The constant change of mood is astonishing: in no time, in all the time there is, Saburov, the hero, is scared that his general will get killed, "an entire section of the stairs was completely blown out by the explosion, and they had to get down by hanging onto the beams and the remains of the balustrade. 'Now d'you see why you oughtn't to hurry your commanding officer?' said Protsenko, 'if we had hurried, you'd have had me right under that one.'" Then: "Petya brought Saburov a pan of boiled potatoes. 'Where did you get these?' 'Here, right around the corner,' Petya said. Saburov who was hungry and had no time for explanations anyway, began to fill his face with potatoes. Petya stood beside him in the pose of an anxious mother." And the exquisite delicacy of the one love story—of Saburov and Anya, is idyllic, pure and fragrant in the midst of so much terror and filth.

The only slightly false note is the story of Vassiliev, the priest's son, the spy. It is dramatically all right and the scene where Saburov is led to his death by Vassiliev, but manages to throttle him with one hand, is horribly and brilliantly told. But Vassiliev is a wooden villain. In an Elizabethan atmosphere, he lacks the subtlety of, say, the Duchess of Malfi, or Richard III. All the other characters are human beings, all act on Polonius's advice, and are true to themselves, and it is enough. But Vassiliev is too simple—evil is something, alas, much thicker in substance than this cardboard villain. Also the scene of the men listening to Stalin's speech is like one of the British Broadcasting Company's efforts "for the troops"—so false J. B. Priestley might have perpetrated it. But the fault may be ours who read: perhaps, it is just that we've had so much propaganda forced upon us, that we stampede or retch at the first whiff. Indeed, Mr. Simonov,

*Days and Nights. Konstantine Simonov. S&S. $2.75.

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who may have portrayed himself as Avdeyev, the war-correspondent who flies in from Moscow to share in the siege (Mr. Simonov himself did this, not once, but many times) ends the book with flawless delicacy, is very wary of emphasis, and errs nowhere else.

This is a story worthy its theme. And than that, no more can be said.

More Books of the Week

The Liberal Tradition. William Aylott Orton. Yale. $3.50.

THIS WORK is not a polemic in the passionate style. It is rather like the careful study of an old friend, still alive, who is much quoted, much maligned and much misunderstood.

For the author, Professor of Economics at Smith College, liberalism is a philosophy of life. He finds its political foundations in Greek thought, the Aristotelian strain: particularly in the Greek emphasis on the stability and impersonality of law as the necessary condition of freedom. The liberal vision was developed and fulfilled by "The Christian Synthesis": the Christian view of the whole man; its doctrine of natural law; the limitation of all secular jurisdiction, implicit in Christianity's two-fold definition of man; and the medieval unity and catholicity of values. Liberalism came to modern fruition in 19th century Britain. Lord Acton, "the great liberal," struck its keynote: "Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end."

The goal which defines liberalism is "expanding freedom within expanding community." Thus true liberalism recognizes that the relationship in society between personal freedom and the need of community is one of polarity. It disinherits the "freedom" of individualism and the atomistic society, even as it abhors the collectivisms which bury the human person in a communal salvation.

Professor Orton's method is historical. After analyzing the Greek roots of the liberal impulse, its synthesis in Christianity, and the opposing values and ideas which shaped its course, he applies the liberal test to the world of today and tomorrow. From that test, collectivism and the omnivorous nation-state emerge as the great threats to freedom.

In the name of a liberal economy based on voluntary cooperation and reform, Orton sounds the same note of warning as Hayek about the dangers to freedom in the welfare state and in cradle-to-grave security; at the same time he gloats as gleefully as Harold Laski over the demise of laissez-faire.

The author saves his very special anathemas for the modern nation-state and its presumptions. Even as he sees no hope for one pole of liberalism (expanding individual freedom) in a centripetal economy, so the other pole (expanding community) is seriously threatened by the modern nation-state. International community and international values will never be achieved by a conglomeration of nation-states. The nation-state is exclusively a power entity. It exists for no altruistic purpose; it cannot be altruistic. The future of force in the world today depends entirely upon the inter-relations of the three dominant powers; and San Francisco with its "world police force," so edifying to American idealists, is an irrelevant side-show.

Professor Orton places his hopes for international com-

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munity on world-wide acceptance of basic religious and ethical values and on cultural, religious, business, and scientific cooperation cutting across the borders of the political nation-states.

Much that Professor Orton has to say has been said before: by Christopher Dawson or Hayek or V. A. Demant or Reinhold Niebuhr. And his solution—fruitful tension between individual and collectivity, between the being of conservatism and the becoming of liberalism—is a familiar call to sanity and balance and re-thinking. But the author has performed an admirable synthesizing task in rescuing the term liberalism from an amorphous relic-heap, attesting to its noble origin, its accomplishments and its relevance to the present and the future seen as a continuing fight for freedom.

The author even succeeds in investing liberalism with the glamor of a personal inspirational philosophy. In his closing chapter, he hails the liberal tradition as a call to adventure, and describes this adventure in terms of a Faustian love for life and for spontaneity and for that persistent striving which Faust himself preferred to security and satiety.

This book is not for specialists, but for the general educated reader. In an era that speaks so glibly and so hopelessly of the inevitability of collectivization, Professor Orton casts a favorite-son vote for freedom.

H. T. MAGUIRE.

The Cossacks. Maurice Hindus. Doubleday. $3.00.

ONE of the most interesting aspects of present day Russia is the blending of the new forms of life, introduced by the Soviet régime, and the traditional trends of Russian society. It was precisely during the war and the Russian people's heroic struggle against Hitler that this blending became most apparent; for at that time all the dynamic forces of the Soviet Union were set to work together, creating not only military and national unity, but a psychological united front. Mr. Maurice Hindus, who knows Russia well, has assiduously sought to explain to the American public at large of what stuff this united front was made. In "The Cossacks" he brings us a picture of that warrior people, which has contributed to Russian history in the past and whose loyalty, courage and fighting spirit has helped the Soviet Union to defeat Hitler. When the galloping Cossacks hacked to pieces a German panzer division, they revived indeed a very old tradition; as Mr. Hindus writes in his preface, "no nation anywhere has cultivated a warrior and human being like the Cossack." Indeed, he symbolizes on one hand the spirit of independence, often fierce and rebellious, which was forever a ferment in the growth of Russian society. On the other hand, he was instrumental in expanding the Russian Empire, and in developing the might of the Russian Army.

Maurice Hindus insists that "it is a fiction to believe that the Cossack is an alien tribesman, a savage Asiatic, whom Czars had bribed or seduced into fighting for them." Actually, he springs from authentic Russian stock; his ancestors were nonconformists, lovers of adventure, sometimes law-breakers, but more often runaway serfs, moved by that spirit of *volnitzsa,* love of liberty, which is the Cossack's characteristic trait even today. He is a Slav, of Great-Russian or Ukrainian origin; he belongs to the Orthodox faith, contrary to his brother in arms, the horseman of the Caucasus, who in many cases is a Moslem. The Cossacks might be called the Russian frontiersmen, and the *Zaporojskaya Sietch,* which was their armed camp on the Dnieper, was a sort of Far West or even Wild West, awakening romantic dreams, attracting lovers of war and danger. To the *Sietch* fled men from all parts of Russia; they fought against the Turks and the Poles; they also fought against Russia, until they made their final submission to the Czars. From the ranks of the Cossacks sprang such famous brigands and rebels as Stenka Razin and Emelian Pugatcheff, and such empire builders as Yermak, the conqueror of Siberia.

Mr. Hindus relates without bias how this warrior people did not easily accept the Bolshevik régime, and fought it stubbornly, until the *volnitza* finally recognized Russia's new leaders. This acceptance of Soviet rule was obtained, first by fighting and repressions, and later through negotiations and careful and intelligent handling of the entire Cossack problem, which the Kremlin solved successfully during the years preceding the war.

The Cossacks have inspired many a Russian writer, from Gogol, who described them in his unforgettable "Tarass Bulba," to the Soviet novelist Mikhael Sholokhoff, who devoted to them his two most remarkable works: "Quiet Flows the Don" and "Broken Earth." If books about the Cossacks generally make good reading—and Mr. Hindus's book is no exception—it is because, as the author tells us, the Russian frontiersman is not only a splendid cavalryman and a courageous soldier, he is also a "human being." His social ideals, his deep love of freedom and of his native land, the solidity of his family life, his absolute loyalty to the cause he has chosen to serve, all these make him an interesting and lovable person, and one of whom Russia, old or new, can be justly proud.

HELEN ISWOLSKY.

Glory for Me. MacKinlay Kantor. Coward. $2.50.

IF MacKinlay Kantor weren't quivering with indignation, he might have written an interesting post-war novel. I say "might" because I doubt if any author who disposes of his characters so sentimentally could handle this subject. He tells the story of three service men, medically discharged, who meet for the first time as they return to their hometown, Boone City in midwest USA. Their acquaintance grows because they have in common their immediate restlessness, their dreadful and haunting war experiences, a longing for the comradeship of their buddies, with whom they shared the kiss of death. And mainly because they don't like the world they come back to.

Fred Derry, 21, lower middle class, a lieutenant in the Air Force, ribbons on chest, killer of a hundred men, "only old in the ways of people wise in war," returns to find that the wife he married twelve days before he left is a tramp. Though he was frequently unfaithful in England, he refuses to listen to her story, tells her to get a divorce. Al Stephenson, 40ish, upper middle class, an infantry sergeant, also covered with medals, finds his devoted wife and son and daughter waiting for him (although in an unattractive apartment rented for the duration) and that he has been made third vice president at the Cornbelt Bank. Homer Wermels, 19, middle class, badly wounded and now a spastic who went in as child and "came out as a monster," returns to his unprepared, uneducated family, who are shocked at Homer's drooling, his flopping limbs, his harelip whine, and practically

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smother him with kindness, pity and lack of understanding.

So they return to what? This novel-in-verse tells us what in increasing bitterness against placid civilians. "Boone City never had a war." The malted milks still whirl; life is their bridge club, their profit on the books. Perhaps Kantor thinks he is citing typical cases. Al's disillusionment is understandable because it is more normal; but with Fred and Homer, the author works himself into such a rage that he wakes up screaming. For hundreds of pages Fred nurses his rancor, drifts from job to job, dares anyone to knock the chip off his shoulder; while Homer, who can't even hold an audience of boys with his exploits, dreams of his fast running childhood and tries to drown his frustration in drinking. Then Kantor really stacks the cards. At the very moment in which vice president Al is putting a mean-spirited dowager in her place and is walking out on petit bourgeoisie, Fred comes to rob the bank; and a few hours later Homer attempts suicide. In the last twenty pages, Kantor hurriedly sets things right: Homer with the girl-next-door who has been studying up on spasticity, Fred with Al's daughter, Al with plans for partnership with an ex-Marine, now a nurseryman.

Perhaps the less said about Kantor's poetry the better. Occasionally, in his characterizations, he has a spark of "Spoon River Anthology" and frequently he strives for the irony of Robinson's "Miniver Cheevy," but this book is not the work of a poet. In fact one wonders why the author chose to write it in verse. Some of the flashbacks to the war are done vividly and make us aware of the real meaning of existence under fire; but in his main narrative, Kantor gets involved in detail and vernacular to the point of absurdity:

> And he took the ketchup that he saw,
> And spread his sandwich red and thick.

"Glory for Me" is being made into a movie by Samuel Goldwyn. Already the starry cast is gathering, and Robert Sherwood is writing the script. No doubt Sherwood will put this verse into straight prose. It is to be hoped that he will also omit the book's bad taste in its sexy passages and explicit descriptions of body functions. Kantor's main subject, the warriors' return, which has already been handled in plays, movies and books, deserves further treatment, but should be stated with thought and understanding, not with sentiment and cynicism in the heat of anger.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Friendly Persuasion. Jessamyn West. Harcourt. $2.50.

THIS is one case where the title of a book is a cue to the reviewer, and I shall be going around for some time trying in a friendly fashion to persuade people to read "The Friendly Persuasion." With those who won't take it on faith, I anticipate some difficulty; for this first book of Jessamyn West's has no gripping plot, isn't exciting, apocalyptic, sexy, timely. It is simply a series of sketches about Jess Birdwell, an Indiana nurseryman, Eliza, his Quaker minister wife, and their six children. Each story is built around a single incident—a shivaree, buying an organ, trading and racing horses, building a bathroom, installing gas lights (which Eliza terms the Illumination). The incident is, of course, quite immaterial, and what emerges is an authentic appreciation of a prairie philosopher and his family, God-fearing

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people living the rural pattern of endless variety and mystery.

The appeal lies in Miss West's ability to weave revealing facts and homely wisdom in and out of skilful dialogue. She delights in sly humor, though occasionally a situation is a bit exaggerated—Eliza's sit-down strike in a snow bank when Jess, contrary to Quaker principles, brings an organ into the house. She knows rural ways intimately and her descriptions of foods, animals, weather and nature will pass the test of both farmers and literary critics. All this goes to make a charming story, and as such it will be remembered by many. But beyond this "The Friendly Persuasion" has the depths of an enduring book. What Miss West has captured, and liberated, is the common truth that normal family living embodies the richest and most intriguing of human values. At bottom the Birdwells are neither eccentric nor exceptional. They are typical of an ancient cycle of ordinary family life. Certainly anyone from a sizable rural family will see his own background countless times as he reads of the Birdwells.

Like every family the Birdwells have their own particular loves and sorrows, humor and pain, cooperation and conflicts. They are distinctive because of their Quaker speech and principles, and because their story is laid in the last half of the 19th century. But it is the genuineness of their personalities and the meaning in their family life which remain. They are timeless. With this possible exception: the progress of our industrial-urban age seems to have hindered the secure, independent, even comfortable family life such as the Birdwells and their neighbors took for granted. I wonder how many members of the UAW would grow wistful reading "The Friendly Persuasion." There's more in that title than a take-off on Quakerism!

EMERSON HYNES.

Gold in the Streets. Mary Vardoulakis. Dodd. $2.50.

THIS YEAR'S winner of the Dodd, Mead Intercollegiate Fellowship is a curious account of American immigrant life. The story begins in rural Greece, the mother country, and carries over to Chicopee Falls, Mass. Without exception, the characters are of a simple, primitive sort, most of them quite gentle and fairly terrified by such phenomena as the physical violence against them of their Polish fellow-workers. The best part of the story is the atmosphere and the group feeling which it conveys. Anyone not interested in rather colorful surface impressions of this sort will not find it particularly absorbing reading. There is something rather remote and quaint about the narrative and an almost complete absence of emotional intensity. For this reason it provides a marked contrast to Maureen Daly's "Seventeenth Summer," which won the first contest, three years ago.

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